

World Health Assembly 2006 Action Alert!!

World Breastfeeding Week 1- 7 Aug. 2006

Code Watch: 25 Years of Protecting Breastfeeding

World Health Assembly Resolution 59.21

27th May 2006

“.....1. REITERATES its support for the Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding;

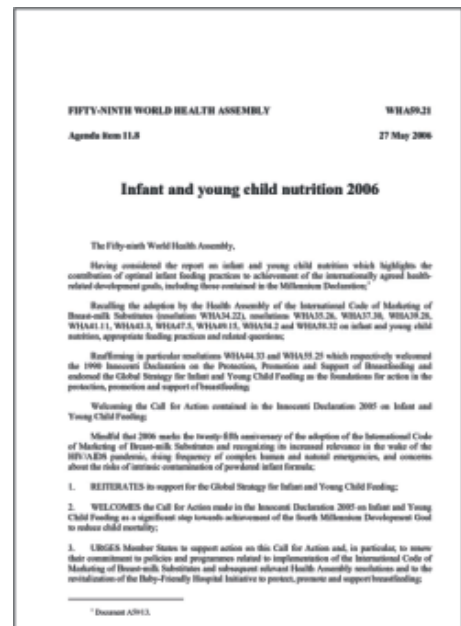
2. WELCOMES the Call for Action made in the Innocenti Declaration 2005 on Infant and Young Child Feeding as a significant step towards achievement of the fourth Millennium Development Goal to reduce child mortality;

3. URGES Member States to support action on this Call for Action and, in particular, to renew their commitment to policies and programmes related to implementation of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and subsequent relevant Health Assembly resolutions and to the revitalization of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative to protect, promote and support breastfeeding;

4. CALLS on multilateral and bilateral donor arrangements and international financial institutions to direct financial resources for Member States to carry out these efforts;

5. REQUESTS the Director-General to mobilize technical support for Member States in the implementation and independent monitoring of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and subsequent relevant Health Assembly resolutions.....”

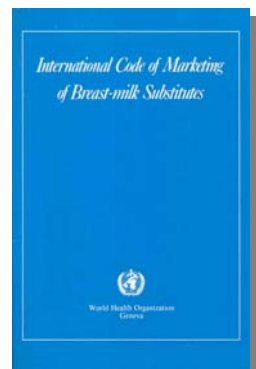
(Emphasis ours)



http://www.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA59/A59_R21-en.pdf

Dear friends in breastfeeding movement

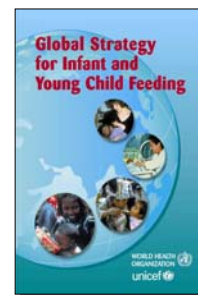
In 1981 World Health Assembly adopted *The International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes* (WHA 34.22), which aims to protect breastfeeding from unethical marketing practices by the baby food industry. After 25 years of the adoption of the Code, the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) has decided to keep the focus of the 2006 World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) on ways to protect breastfeeding by eliminating advertising and other harmful marketing practices for infant feeding products and the theme of this year’s WBW is **“Code Watch: 25 Years of Protecting Breastfeeding”**.



Subsequent World Health Assembly resolutions provide framework for action on all but most importantly on the Code. The WHA 35.26, WHA 37.30, WHA 39.28, WHA 41.11, WHA 43.3, WHA 44.33, WHA 47.5, WHA 49.15, WHA 54.2 and WHA 55.25 call for action to improve infant feeding practices.



In May 2002, the World Health Assembly (WHA) adopted another landmark Resolution 55.25, to adopt the *Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding*, which was endorsed by the UNICEF Executive Board in September 2002 bringing a unique global consensus. The strategy recognised that 2/3rd of 10.9 million global child deaths are related to inappropriate infant and young child feeding. And among three main reasons for poor feeding practices, aggressive marketing of baby foods was recognised to be an important one, others being social influences and lack of health care support. To tackle the commercial marketing of baby foods, governments all over the world are expected to take action in the form of legislations and effectively enforce them. Globally, more than half the world's nations have taken some type of action and among them only 32 countries have enacted a legislation, and another 44 have law which partially controls the marketing of breastmilk substitutes and feeding bottles.



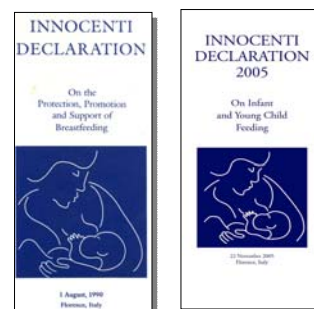
Innocenti Declaration on Infant and Young Child Feeding 2005 recognizes, <http://innocenti15.net/declaration.pdf.pdf>

“.....Nevertheless, **inappropriate feeding practices – sub-optimal or no breastfeeding and inadequate complementary feeding – remain the greatest threat to child health and survival globally.** Improved breastfeeding alone could save the lives of more than 3,500 children every day, more than any other preventive intervention.....”

It calls for action on many areas including the following two:

“....Implement all provisions of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and subsequent relevant World Health Assembly resolutions in their entirety as a minimum requirement, and establish sustainable enforcement mechanisms to prevent and/or address non-compliance....”

“....Identify and allocate sufficient resources to fully implement actions called for in the Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding....”



Now its Time to Act!

This is the time for action and an opportunity. During the year 2006 and beyond following actions would be most useful:

1. Call upon your governments to implement the Code in your country, legislate if not yet done, and effectively implement it.
 - Action should take into account, the Code and subsequent and relevant World Health Assembly (WHA) resolutions.
2. Call upon your governments to commit financial resources for implementing the **Call for Action**
3. Encourage the media to provide positive images of optimal infant and young child feeding, to support breastfeeding as the norm, and to participate in social mobilization.
4. Join us to make an assessment, where your country stands on implementing the Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding by participating in the World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTI) (www.worldbreastfeedingtrends.org), For more information, write to us at info@ibfan-asiapacific.org

Let's join hands to save millions of babies who die unnecessarily because of inappropriate feeding practices. Finally, do share with us your experience and actions along with pictures if any!

In solidarity,

Dr. Arun Gupta

Regional Coordinator, IBFAN Asia Pacific

arun@ibfan-asiapacific.org



International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN), Asia Pacific

BP-33, Pitampura, Delhi 110 034, India

Tel: +91-11-27315936, 42683059

Tel/Fax: +91-11-27343606

Email: info@ibfan-asiapacific.org